

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**RECORD OF DECISION OF THE COBTREE MANOR ESTATE CHARITY
COMMITTEE**

Decision Made: 11 March 2015

COBTREE SHED

Issue for Decision

To consider allowing a Cobtree Sheds group to be established in the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park.

Decision Made

1. That a Cobtree Sheds group be set up and overseen by the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership in accordance with the proposal set out in Appendix A to the report of the Cobtree Officer.
2. That the new Cobtree Sheds group be given permission to set up a Shed in the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park.
3. That in addition to the renovation of the Elephant House, the Sheds group be asked to provide volunteering time across the Cobtree Estate in lieu of rent.
4. That the Head of Legal Partnership be requested to draw up the necessary agreement with the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership on behalf of the Charity known as the Cobtree Manor Estate to this effect.

Reasons for Decision

It was originally hoped to set up a Cobtree Shed in a building at the Kent Life visitor attraction following its renovation by the charity known as Futures for Heroes. However, last summer, the building that was due to be used was completely destroyed by fire. After meetings with Futures for Heroes and the Sheds group it was decided that a more public site would be preferable and the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park was identified as a possible location.

The Shed will provide a hub for volunteering at the heart of Cobtree Manor Park. The Elephant House is currently unused and will make an excellent base for a future Sheds workshop, whilst presenting the opportunity for a renovation project.

Hosting the Shed at Cobtree Manor Park will encourage and provide opportunities for volunteering and help in kind across the Estate. There will be a wide range of tasks that the group can assist with from

conservation and woodland management to mending fences and building bird boxes.

The Cobtree Shed is supported by a number of professional partner organisations and the necessary funding is in place. The Sheds group will be expected to carry out the majority of the work itself under the supervision and guidance of the Sheds Officer who will be employed by the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.

It is the object of the Charity known as the Cobtree Manor Estate to use its assets (with the appropriate consents of the Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd. and the Kent County Council) for the benefit of the people of Maidstone; therefore, the setting up of a Shed at Cobtree Manor Park directly supports these aims.

Alternatives Considered and Why Rejected

The alternative is not to allow a Shed to be set up at Cobtree Manor Park Elephant House. This is not considered appropriate as the Cobtree Manor Park and the Estate as a whole stand to gain a great deal in volunteering time and skills from a project based on site. The Elephant House is currently unused so this proposal will ensure that the building is put to good purpose.

Background Papers

None.

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Finance and Resources by: 19 March 2015.
